

English Transcript for *Understanding Deadlines*

During your research, you're going to find a lot of information about application deadlines. An application deadline is the date by which you have to submit your application and the rest of your application documents to a university. Understand that most application deadlines are not flexible. If you miss the deadline, you might miss your chance to apply. Deadlines are going to control your whole process. So it is important that you understand the different types of deadlines that you are going to find. The two main types of deadlines that we're going to discuss are deadline admission and rolling admission. In deadline admission, universities will publish a single deadline date. The schools will collect applications up to that date. And after the deadline date, they will evaluate the applications and choose the best students from among the applications they receive. Now remember, the best students are not always the ones with the highest grades or test scores. But they are the best students for that university. In deadline admission, you can have up to three different ways to apply. First, there's early admission or early decision. They're two terms that refer to the same thing. These are usually the earliest deadlines arriving in November and the earliest notification. You will usually receive your answer in about two months. You can only apply to one school through early admission or early decision, because it is a binding application. Binding means that if you apply early decision and you are accepted, you must attend that school and withdraw all other applications to other universities. When you apply through early admission, you will actually sign a contract agreeing to do this. So you have to love a school in order to apply early decision. Applying early admission is a big decision. And you need to seriously consider what an early admission application means before actually applying through this program. Applying early is, however, the ultimate way to show your interest in a school. So if you do love a certain school and your best application can be ready by November, early admission might be a good option for you. Another option in deadline admission is early action. This deadline follows similar timing. You'll apply in November and receive a decision within two months. However, early action is non-binding. If you are accepted through early action, you do not have to attend that school if you're accepted. And you do not have to withdraw your applications from other schools. Sometimes you'll see what's called single choice early action, which means you can only apply to that one school through early action. But that is more rare. Early action is a great way to show your interest in a school and to get your admission decision sooner rather than later. And all of it is without the obligation to attend that school. The third option in deadline admission is regular decision. Regular decision deadlines are most commonly in January or February. But sometimes they can be earlier. For example, the University of California system has a November 30th deadline. The University of Texas at Austin has a December 1st deadline. Regular decision is also non-binding, and decisions are usually received sometime between February and March, depending on when the application deadline was. Now the second main type of deadline is rolling admission. In rolling admission, universities will evaluate applications as they are completed. In this method, universities are constantly reviewing applications and sending decisions. The first students to complete their application will receive their decision first. The next students to complete their application will receive their decisions next. Because applications are evaluated as they are received, applicants are mostly being compared to a set of criteria or requirements. The best students are those who meet the criteria. Now, it's not harder or easier to get into a school that uses rolling admission. It's just different. One important thing to keep in mind is that schools on rolling admission can fill up quickly.

If you wait too long to apply, you will find that there are naturally less spaces available. Often, to get one of those remaining spaces, the admissions criteria can be harder at the end of the process than it was earlier in the process. If you have rolling admission schools on your list, definitely consider applying earlier rather than later. Now that you know what the deadlines mean, you have to think about when you are going to submit your application. Ask yourself, is this my best application or could my application be better if I wait to apply? Think about your test scores, your English skills. How much time you have to write essays and much more, which we'll discuss. Will your best application be ready in November? Or December? Or January? We're actually going to discuss planning a little bit more in the next section. Finally, if you feel like the only weak point in your application is your English language ability, there are two types of special admission programs that you might want to look for. The first is called conditional admission. In conditional admission, universities will evaluate your application on all of these pieces, except for your English language test scores. If they feel like you would be a good student, they can offer you conditional acceptance which says, we will fully accept you as soon as you meet our English language requirement. The good thing about conditional admission is that you can complete the application process by the deadline even if your English test scores maybe aren't as high as you would like. You also have the security of knowing the university wants to accept you. You just have to meet that one final requirement. Remember, you cannot attend a school with only a conditional admission. You still have to fulfill that last requirement to get your full acceptance before you can enroll in a university. Now, not all schools will offer conditional admission. It's not always an option, and generally, you will not find conditional admission offered at highly selective schools. Furthermore, there's really no way to do a general search for schools that offer conditional admission. The best way to look for them is to check school by school as you're doing your research. The second type of special admission program goes by different names, but most commonly, they're called either bridge or pathways programs. These programs are offered by colleges and universities that also have an intensive English language program on campus. A bridge program allows a student to enroll in both the university and the English program at the same time. Part of the courses will be English language courses. And the other part of the courses will be degree courses. Usually, after a year of good performance, the students will move out of the bridge program and become a full-time bachelor's degree student. Again, the difficulty with finding bridge programs is that they all go by different names. And there's really no way to do a general search for these programs. So once again, you'll want to look for these special types of programs as you do your research school by school. When to apply is a big decision. Remember, let your best application guide you on your path to applying. We'll talk more about that path next.

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